AmigaMCCC News
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DRM Strikes

WalMart shutting down DRM server, nuking your music collection — only people who pay for music risk losing it to DRM shenanigans.

Posted by Cory Doctorow
September 26, 2008 8:34 PM

http://www.boingboing.net/2008/09/26/walmart-shutting-dow.html

Hey suckers! Did you buy DRM music from WalMart instead of downloading MP3s for free from the P2P networks? Well, they're repaying your honesty by taking away your music. Unless you go through a bunch of hoops (that you may never find out about, if you've changed email addresses or if you're not a very technical person), your music will no longer be playable after October 9th.

But don't worry, this will never ever happen to all those other DRM companies — unlike little fly-by-night mom-and-pop operations like WalMart, the DRM companies are rock-ribbed veterans of commerce and industry, sure to be here for a thousand years. So go on buying your Audible books, your iTunes DRM songs, your Zune media, your EA games. None of these companies will ever disappear, nor will the third-party DRM suppliers they use. They are as solid and permanent as Commodore, Atari, the Soviet Union, the American credit system and the Roman Empire.

Boy, the entertainment industry sure makes a good case for ripping them off, huh? Buy your media and risk having it confiscated by a DRM-server shutdown. Take it for free and keep it forever.

From: Walmart Music Team
Date: Fri, Sep 26, 2008 at 7:42 PM
Subject: Important Information About Your Walmart.com Digital Music Purchases
To: xxxxxx@gmail.com

Important Information About Your Digital Music Purchases

We hope you are enjoying the increased music quality/bitrate and the improved usability of Walmart's MP3 music downloads. We began offering MP3s in August 2007 and have offered only DRM (digital rights management)-free MP3s since February 2008. As the final stage of our transition to a full DRM-free MP3 download store, Walmart will be shutting down our digital rights management system that supports protected songs and albums purchased from our site.

If you have purchased protected WMA music files from our site prior to Feb 2008, we strongly recommend that you back up your songs by burning them to a recordable audio CD. By backing up your songs, you will be able to access them from any personal computer. This change does not impact songs or albums purchased after Feb 2008, as those are DRM-free.

Beginning October 9, we will no longer be able to assist with digital rights management issues for protected WMA files purchased from Walmart.com. If you do not back up your files before this date, you will no longer be able to transfer *your songs to other computers or access your songs after changing or reinstalling your operating system or in the event of a system crash. Your music and video collections will still play on the originally authorized computer.*

Thank you for using Walmart.com for music downloads. We are working hard to make our store better than ever and easier to use.

Walmart Music Team

Thanks to Kevin Hopkins
Editor of the Status Register
CUCUG

Microsoft Patent

Microsoft has been granted a patent on "Page Up" and "Page Down" keystrokes.

The software giant applied for the patent in 2005, and was granted it on August 19, 2008. US patent number 7,415,666 describes "a method and system in a document viewer for scrolling a substantially exact increment in a document, such as one page, regardless of whether the zoom is such that some, all or one page is currently being viewed".

The patent's listed "inventors" are Timothy Sellers, Heather Grantham and Joshua Dersch. However, Page Up and Page Down keyboard buttons have been in existence for at least quarter of a century, as evidenced by this image of a 1981 IBM PC keyboard. *[Editor's Note: Check the article on the web for the image.]*

"In one implementation, pressing a Page Down or Page Up keyboard key/button allows a user to begin at any starting vertical location within a page, and navigate to that same location on the next or previous page," reads the patent's summary.

"For example, if a user is viewing a page starting in a viewing area from the middle of that page and ending at the bottom, a Page Down command will cause the next page to be shown in the viewing area starting at the middle of the next page and ending at the bottom of the next page. Similar behavior occurs when there is more than one column of pages being displayed in a row," states the summary.

Microsoft has a long history of applying for, and being granted patents for, inventions that many argue—and can sometimes demonstrate—were based on earlier work carried out by others, or based on a common, self-evident idea.

One example is the company's patent on a mouse wheel that can scroll up and down; another is its patent on double-clicking buttons. The company received its 5,000th patent from the US Patent and Trademark Office in March 2006, and is currently approaching the 10,000 mark.

…by David Meyer, ZDNet.co.uk
http://news.zdnet.com/2424-9595_22-218626.html?tag=nl.e550

Petascale Computer

$208 Million Petascale Computer System Gets Green Light

Forget about dual, quad, or even eight-core processors, all of which would prove woefully inadequate next to the system being called Blue Waters. The 200,000 processor core supercomputer got the green light at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, finalizing a contract with IBM to build the what will be the world's first sustained petascale computational system.

For anyone not up on their flops, a petaflop is the equivalent to roughly 1 quadrillion calculations per second, presumably just enough to get a decent framerate out of Crysis. Coupled with the 200,000 processor cores will be more than a petabyte of memory and more than 10 petabytes of disk storage. And yes, that would hold a lot of porn, though Blue Waters will spend its time on scintillating real-world scientific and engineering applications.

Specifically, the National Science Foundations says that Blue Waters will wade into the study of complex processes like the interaction of the Sun's coronal mass ejections with the Earth's magnetosphere and ionosphere. Other examples include the formation and evolution of galaxies in the early universe, understanding the chains of reactions that occur with livings cells, the design of novel materials, and other decidedly nerd topics that have nothing to do with propelling Folding at Home team 11108 ahead of the competition.

…by Paul Lilly
http://www.maximumpc.com/article/news/208_million_petascale_computer_system_gets_green_light

Ned Kelly with the latest AmigaOS 4.1

October Calendar

October 27 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:00 pm — **Main** Grand Prairie Public Library
901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie

October 27 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 9:15 pm — Location TBD

November 1 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am